

# **REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION OF US 97 PATEROS TO CANADIAN BORDER AS STATE SCENIC BYWAY**

## **BRIEFING PAPER**

Prepared for the  
JUNE 2002 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Prepared by  
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### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this agenda item is to brief the Commission on action they will be asked to take at the July Commission Meeting. At that time, the Scenic Byway Committee of Highway 97 Border Region Coalition will request that the Transportation Commission adopt a resolution to designate the 83 mile route from Pateros to the Canadian border as a state designated scenic byway (see attached).

### **ACTION/OUTCOME:**

In consideration of improving tourism promotion, traveler education, and resource interpretation of the stories of the northern US 97 corridor, the Scenic Byway Committee of Highway 97 Border Region Coalition has developed and applied criteria for selection of the Northern US 97 Byway. If the Commission adopts the resolution to officially recognize this byway as a state designated scenic byway, the coalition will become eligible to apply for corridor management planning funds from the National Scenic Byway Program (NSB). It is the intent of the Coalition to apply for these funds in the current FY 2003 NSB cycle. The Coalition is required to complete a corridor management plan before becoming eligible to apply for National Scenic Byway status or apply for project funding from the National Scenic Byway Program.

### **BACKGROUND:**

This is the first addition of a state highway to the State Scenic Byway system since 1993.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Staff from Heritage Corridors Program and North Central Region have been working informally over the last year and a half with communities along the northern section of US 97, who want this portion of US 97 designated as a state scenic byway. In early 2002, the Scenic Byway Committee of Highway 97 Border Region Coalition made formal application to Heritage Corridors Program, to be assessed for qualification, and began the public involvement process. This will include the following schedule:

- March 2002 – Community Meeting #1 held in Omak and conducted by Heritage Corridors Program Manager Judy Lorenzo and Business & Tourism Representative George Sharp. Staff provided training and information for citizens and elected officials. Over fifty participants attending expressed an interest in further participation in the state byway program, including a representative from the Colville Tribe.
- June 2002 - An on-line public comment page was activated and a formal press release and newspaper notices announcement was placed to advertise a public meeting in Omak on June 24, 2002.
- June 6, 2002 – A multi-disciplinary Recommendation Panel will review the designation application. Staff will summarize Panel comments for the June Commission briefing (see attached). The Panel will help establish resource evaluation benchmark criteria and traveler service requirements.
- Week of June 10<sup>th</sup>-14 – Heritage Corridors and regional staff will conduct a visual assessment of the route. (See attached)
- June 14, 2002 – Community Meeting #2 - Heritage Corridors Program staff and North Central Region Planning office Staff will meet with the communities along the corridor to provide feedback on the pre-application form that was submitted to WSDOT. Staff will provide the Commission with an update as to the details of this meeting as part of the presentation.
- June 19-20, 2002 - Transportation Commission Meeting  
The public will have further opportunity to comment on the request. Heritage Corridors Program Staff will brief the Commission on the current levels of public support.
- June 24, 2002 – Public Meeting #3 - Byway Advocates and Heritage Corridors Program staff will co-host a public meeting to formally respond to public comments in the corridor region.
- July 17-18, 2002 – Transportation Commission Meeting - The public will have a final opportunity to comment on the designation. Heritage Corridors Program Staff will request the Commission take action on the formal recommendation from the Washington State Byway Recommendation Panel. Local proponents will attend to testify in support.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

No action is required this month.

For further information contact: Judy Lorenzo, Manager, Heritage Corridors Program (360) 705-7274 and Paula Connelley, Scenic Byway Lead, (360) 705-7895.